7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

RITES OF PASSAGE

BIRTHDAYS AND BAPTISM

IN the traditional culture of the Middle East (urban, village, or nomad), the status of midwife is a very important one. Midwives are invariably local women past menopause, and men are rigidly excluded from the house while the birth is taking place (cf. Granqvist, 1947, pp. 56–60). 844 554 758

Only one villager was born during the period of study, and the event took place in Beirut (the family is in the Summer Resident category) some time before the writer learned of it. The majority of Munsif's housewives of childbearing age live in the city most of the year, and for the most part they clearly prefer the services of physicians and hospitals in important medical matters.

Once born, the modern village infant, judging from the very few cases observed, spends his time in a crib and is not swaddled restrictively. After the first few weeks, he may be fed from a modern nursing bottle. Factory-made toys are not very common in Lebanon, but small cars and trucks and at least one tricycle were observed in the village. [854] 857

Birthday anniversaries are celebrated in a few families. There is a cake with candles, and the whole affair is new, probably inspired by experiences in American boarding schools. 527 852

Baptism is performed anywhere from forty days to about two years after the birth of the child. It appeared that the mode tended toward the latter age. The ritual is accompanied by at least a family party, but in some cases, according to one informant, the baptismal party may approach a wedding party in size.

ENGAGEMENT AND MARRIAGE

Engagement. Engagement (*khuṭbi*) is a more or less formal status. Quite often the couple simply declare themselves engaged, with the tacit approval of the priest. If both parties are members of the village, the priest's only official concern is that they are more distantly related than first cousin. If they are first cousins, it is his duty to inform them that he will be unable to marry them. In any case, the couple may or may not come to the priest for his blessing. Wedding rings (plain gold bands) are worn by both parties on the right hand to signify engagement. At the marriage ceremony, they are transferred to the left. Engaged couples may see each other alone at any time, and no questions are asked. Young 584 [582]

instruction. Since 1951, nurses have also been trained at the Christian Medical Center in Beirut. A School of Midwifery is incorporated in the Faculté Française de Médecine, and has a 3-year course for the training of midwives.

Personnel

Physicians. Eight hundred and sixteen physicians were reported as practicing in Lebanon in 1948—roughly 1 per 1,500 population. Of this number, 430 were located in Beirut and the remainder in the provinces—123 in North Lebanon, 148 in Mount Lebanon, 55 in South Lebanon and 60 in the Bekaa. In 1951, the staff of the Ministry of Public Health included 30 doctors—8 attached to the headquarters in Beirut, 4 in the quarantine services and 18 in charge of the *caza* units. The municipality of Beirut employs 18 to 20 physicians and the Ministry of National Education, 6.

Dentists. Reports for 1948 indicate that there were 186 dentists in the country, 89 of whom were settled in Beirut.

Nurses. In 1950, it was estimated that there were from 550 to 600 nurses in Lebanon. In addition, nursing nuns serve in the hospitals operated by religious orders.

Others. The official publications for 1948 listed 238 graduate midwives and 108 midwives with practical training. Over 78 per cent of the graduate midwives were located in the vicinity of Beirut. The same year, there were 133 graduate pharmacists and 61 assistant pharmacists.

DISEASES

Prior to 1943, public health activity was largely concentrated in Beirut; consequently, the organization of preventive services and the extension of medical facilities in the provincial districts are still in the developmental stage. At present the reports of research investigations sponsored by the medical departments of the French and the American universities and by other agencies provide the chief sources of information regarding the prevalence of specific